

Message Text

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61

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 OES-03 HEW-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5953

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E.O.11652 N/A

TAGS: EAID, BL

SUBJECT: BISHOPS' PASTORAL LETTER ON FAMILY PLANNING

REF: STATE 054527

1. PASTORAL LETTER PUBLISHED IN FULL BY PRESENCIA AND IN PART BY HOY ON MAR 11. ESSENCE OF LETTER WAS THAT PROGRAMS AIMED SOLEY AT LIMITING BIRTHS WERE AGAINST CATHOLIC RELIGION AND NOT IN INTEREST OF BOLIVIA WHICH NEEDS MORE PEOPLE TO FILL UNDERPOPULATED AREAS AND TO PROVIDE HUMAN RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT. HOWEVER, LETTER DID STATE THAT BISHOPS DID NOT BELIEVE IN HIGH BIRTH RATE AT ANY COST BUT RATHER THAT PROCREATION SHOULD BE GUIDED BY REASON AND AITH IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE BIRTH OF CHILDREN WHO ARE WANTED AND WHO WILL BE ABLE TO DEVELOP THEIR FULL POTENTIAL. LETTER ALSO PURPORTS TO DESCRIBE ACTIVITIES IN BOLIVIA OF AID (BASICALLY ITS SUPPORT FOR CENAFI AND THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH'S MATERNAL/CHILD HEALTH PROGRAM), THE UNFPA, AND PROFAM. AFTER DOING SO LETTER STATES THAT THESE PROGRAMS HAVE INTENTION OF ACHIEVING INTERNATIONAL DOMINATION AND PRESERVATION OF BOLIVIA AS SOURCE OF RAW MATERIALS WHICH IS CONSISTENT WITH THE POLICIES OF THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD POPULATION CONFERENCE AND WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE IN WHICH THEY SHOWED A UNILATERAL INTEREST IN POPULATION CONTROL AND AN EGOISTIC REFUSAL

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TO HELP THE HUNGRY.

2. MINISTRY OF HEALTH ISSUED STATEMENT LATE MARCH 11 WHICH WAS CARRIED IN FULL IN EL DIARIO AND PRESENCIA AND IN PART IN HOW ON MARCH 12. ESSENCE OF STATEMENT WAS THAT GOB AGREED THAT BOLIVIA NEEDED LARGER POPULATION AND THAT A BIRTH CONTROL POLICY WAS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR IT, AND THAT GOB WAS PLEASED TO SEE THAT BISHOPS SUPPORTED RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD WHICH WAS POLICY OF GOB. STATEMENT TOOK ISSUE WITH CERTAIN STATEMENTS OF FACT IN BISHOPS' LETTER AND REVIEWED ACTIVITIES OF GOB ALL OF WHICH AIMED AT IMPROVED HEALTH OF POPULATION AND PROVIDING INFORMATION NECESSARY FOR FAMILIES FREELY TO EXERCISE RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD THEREBY REDUCING ABORTION AND CHILD MORTALITY RATES. STATEMENT CONTAINED ASSERTION THAT TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES WERE IMPORTANT TO THE GOB'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE POPULATION.

3. EDITORIALS IN PRESENCIA AND HOY ON MARCH 12 SUPPORTED BISHOPS' LETTER IN SENSE OF AGREEING THAT BOLIVIA NEEDED MORE PEOPLE AND THAT ANY EFFORT OF FOREIGN AGENCIES TO RESTRICT BIRTHS FOR THEIR OWN SELFISH INTERESTS SHOULD NOT BE TOLERATED. NEITHER MADE REFERENCE TO THE GOB'S STATEMENT.

4. OUR CURRENT ESTIMATE IS THAT THE BISHOPS' LETTER WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON ATTITUDE OF BOLIVIAN POPULATION TOWARD FAMILY PLANNING MATTERS AND THAT GOB WILL CONTINUE TO BE RECEPTIVE TO INCREASED EFFORTS IN FAMILY PLANNING IF DONE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF BROADER HEALTH PROGRAMS AND IN A DISCREET MANNER. WE DOUBT THAT LETTER WILL HAVE LASTING NEGATIVE IMPACT ON USG'S REPUTATION, BUT ARE PLANNING TO STEP-UP OUR PUBLICITY CONCERNING AID'S DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN ORDER COUNTERACT ANY IMPRESSION THAT USG ONLY INVOLVED IN FAMILY PLANNING.

5. WE AGREE TO OUR USE INFORMATION IN SECTOR ASSESSMENT AND PUTTING STRESS ON FACT THAT ALL AID ACTIVITIES IN BOLIVIA ARE PURSUANT TO WRITTEN AGREEMENTS WITH GOB. SUGGEST YOU MIGHT ALSO NOTE THAT AID FAMILY CARE PROGRAM NOT AIMED AT LIMITING GROWTH OF BOLIVIAN POPULATION BUT RATHER IS IN SUPPORT OF RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD AND POPULATION GROWTH CONSISTENT WITH BOLIVIA'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS, AND THAT USG IS PROVIDING SUBSTANTIAL RESOURCES BOTH DIRECTLY THROUGH AID AND INDIRECTLY THROUGH MULTILATERAL AGENCIES IN SUPPORT OF BOLIVIA'S DEVELOPMENT.

6. TEXT OF BISHOPS' LETTER AND MINISTRY OF HEALTH'S STATEMENT ARE BEING POUCHED.
DECONTROL FOLLOWING MARCH 31, 1978.

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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